

REMARKS

Applicants have amended claims 1, 9, 10 and 17, and have cancelled claim 8, accordingly, claims 1-20 remain in the present application and are respectfully presented for the Examiner's favorable consideration in view of the following remarks.

Initially, Applicants' undersigned counsel would like to express his appreciation to Examiner Hsieh for granting him the courtesy of a telephonic interview on March 4, 2005. The foregoing amendments and following remarks are believed to be consistent with the discussion that took place during the interview. Thus, the claims are now believed to be in condition for allowance.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-5, 7, 10-13, 15, and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by USPN 4,685,373 to Novo. With the exception of claims 8 and 9, all other claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable as obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art over a combination of Novo in view of either USPN 5,929,361 to Tanaka; USPN 3,854,370 to Sapinski; or USPN 5,107,743 to Decker.

Applicants appreciate that the Examiner acknowledged that claims 8 and 9 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

As indicated in the above amendments, and discussed during the telephonic interview, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the features of allowable dependent claim 8. Thus, claim 8 has been cancelled, and the dependency of claim 9 has been amended to indicate that it is now dependent from claim 1.

Independent claims 10 and 17 have also been amended to incorporate the feature recited in allowable claim 8.

As discussed during the telephonic interview, Applicants have also submitted an Information Disclosure Statement identifying USPN 6,225,544 to Sciortino. Applicants respectfully submit that Sciortino does not disclose the invention as recited in independent claims 1, 10 and 17. An appropriate petition for consideration of the Information Disclosure Statement is also enclosed.

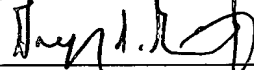
As it is believed that all of the rejections set forth in the Official Action have been fully met, favorable reconsideration and allowance are earnestly solicited.

If, however, for any reason the Examiner does not believe that such action can be taken at this time, it is respectfully requested that he call Applicants' attorney at (908) 654-5000 in order to discuss any additional objections which he might have.

Finally, if the Examiner should feel that any fee is due in connection with the submission of this Amendment, he is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 12-1095 therefor.

Dated: March 16, 2005

Respectfully submitted,

By 

Gregory S. Gewirtz

Registration No.: 36,522

LERNER, DAVID, LITTENBERG,

KRUMHOLZ & MENTLIK, LLP

600 South Avenue West

Westfield, New Jersey 07090

(908) 654-5000

Attorney for Applicant